

REMARKS

Claims 9-12, 15-18, and 21-30 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, claims 1-6 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Entry of the above amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 (a) in that the above Amendment (1) places the claims in condition for allowance; (2) places the claims in better condition for consideration on appeal, if necessary; (3) does not raise any new issues; and (4) does not add new claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims. For the reasons given above, entry of the above amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 is respectfully requested.

I. Allowed Claims

Applicants note with much appreciation that claims 9-12, 15-18, and 21-30 are allowed.

II. Claim Objections

The Office Action objects to claims 5-6. Although not specifically recited in the current Office Action, in the previous Office Action mailed May 22, 2006, claims 5-6 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Since new claims were previously added including the recitations of claim 5 and all intervening recitations and the recitation of claim 6 and all intervening recitations, claims 5 and 6 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the objection of claims 5-6 moot.

III. Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,516,427 to Keyes (hereinafter “Keyes”). As noted above, claims 1-4 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the rejection of claims 1-4 moot.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, Applicants assert that the pending claims 9-12, 15-18, and 21-30 are in condition for allowance. Applicants further assert that this response addresses each and every point of the final Office Action, and respectfully request that the Examiner pass this application with claims 9-12, 15-18, and 21-30 to allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact Applicants' attorney at 404.815.1900.

Respectfully submitted,

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